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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

THURSDAY, September 7, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "Housecleaning Ideas." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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If you can believe the stories of many husbands who lived in the period before modern cleaning methods, fall and spring housecleaning was a reign of terror for the menfolks. According to the tales I've heard, Father fled from home covering to the club while Mother practically tore the house limb from limb in the name of cleanliness.

Well, times change and cleaning methods with them. Since that day our habits of living have changed and our household tools have improved so that housecleaning is now spread pretty evenly through the year, except perhaps for a few special tasks that we do in May or September. Nowadays Father can remain at home in peace and comfort the year round, and the house will be cleaner than it was in the old days.

The tool that has perhaps done most to emancipate women from those old-time cleaning upheavals is the vacuum cleaner. If you use a vacuum properly and regularly on your floor coverings once a week, say, you'll seldom if ever have to send them to the cleaner. And you'll keep out that destructive grit which settles to the bottom of rugs and cuts their fibers if it remains there long and is ground in by feet passing over the rug.

If you own a vacuum cleaner, make the most of it and its attachments. If you adjust the nozzle properly, you can clean bare floors and linoleum of the gritty dirt that is so hard on the polish. Most vacuum cleaners are equipped with extension tubes for cleaning walls, hangings, upholstery, mattresses and pillows. The blower attachments are very helpful for removing dirt from "ornery" radiators, bed springs, light fixtures and other hard-to-get-at places. If you give proper systematic cleaning to your walls, rugs and hangings, as well as to your upholstered furniture, mattresses and so on, they'll never need drastic cleaning and the fabrics will last longer. Dirt harms fabrics. So does severe cleaning, such as beating or shaking. If you don't believe me, ask the textile specialists.

What about occasional spots on rugs? Take these out much as you do spots or stains on any heavy fabric. A good cleaning fluid will take out spots of the grease variety. And usually mild soap and warm water will remove other common stains.

As for cleaning your small rag rugs or your little chenille rugs, you can shampoo these in suds if the color is fast. A washing machine is a great convenience for this job. Wash the rug first in suds. Then rinse it thoroughly in clear lukewarm water.



Once in a long, long time a large rug may also need a shampoo. But this isn't very likely if you are careful about regular cleaning through the years. Now and then a rug begins to look dull and grimy and no amount of brushing or vacuuming will improve its appearance. If you are careful in your methods and take plenty of time, you can clean it with some mild soap jelly, two medium-stiff brushes, and some lukewarm water for rinsing. You do this type of shampoo on the installment plan, section by section, and for success you need to work rapidly and use very little moisture. Never let the water soak into the rug.

Make a jelly by dissolving soap flakes or a finely shaved mild soap in boiling water. Then let it stand until it is cold when it will jelly. Now have your rug cleaned of all surface dirt and lay it on a flat surface. A clean linoleum floor is just the thing for this purpose. Wash the rug in areas about two feet square. With a brush, spread soap jelly over this area and scrub with a circular motion over the entire section three or four times. Then scrape off the soiled lather with a dull-edged tool. Scrape always in the direction of the nap. Discard the soiled lather, dip another brush in clear lukewarm water and again brush the rug in a circular motion. Repeat this several times to get all the soap and loosened dirt out of the rug. Remove all the moisture possible with a clean dry cloth, before you move on to the next section of the rug. When you have cleaned the entire surface this way, hang the rug over two or more parallel lines to dry. This will provide a free circulation of air for rapid drying. A bright, dry windy day is best for a job of this sort. But always have the rug in the shade. If you must dry the rug inside, you'll find that an electric fan will hasten the process. Be sure the rug is entirely dry before you put it on the floor. Otherwise the fibers underneath will rot or mildew.

This simple home method of cleaning rugs, you can also apply to cleaning upholstery, provided that the fabric is fast in color. Before you try it, better test the fabric in a small inconspicuous place with clean, lukewarm water. Be sure the color doesn't run before you proceed.

The points to remember for success in this type of cleaning are: first, use the least possible amount of moisture, being careful never to let the water soak in; second, use mild soap jelly and lukewarm water for rinsing; third, keep the cleaning materials clean -- brushes, soap jelly or suds, rinsing water; fourth, work rapidly; fifth; wash and rinse thoroughly.

By the way, I hope you wear rubber gloves for all these jobs. They save hands.

Let's see now. Any more house-cleaning ideas that we ought to mention before we say good-bye? Oh, yes. Here are a couple sent in by some friends. One good housekeeper suggests that she uses the ounce of prevention idea in house-cleaning. She believes in keeping all possible dirt out, thus easing up her cleaning job. So she has a door mat in front of every door. And just outside the back door, she keeps a little broom. The children have learned to use this broom to brush off dust, sand or mud from shoes in summer and remove snow in winter.

Another housekeeper writes me that she has two soap dishes over her kitchen sink. One is for soap, of course. The other holds pot scrubbers, small brushes or steel wool within convenient reach. Seems to me this would be a good idea for the bathroom, wouldn't it? The extra soap dish could hold the brush for scrubbing the youngsters' nails.

Friday: "Homemade Pickles and Relishes from the Garden."

